

3. Preparing for a Standards Verifier/ External Examiner Visit



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Planning the visit

Planning ahead for the visit is an important part of the standards verification process. Planning helps the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to use the time effectively and to provide you with support and guidance. Planning will also help you understand what will be required from you and other staff on the day.

Before each visit the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will send you a visit plan. They will copy in your Regional Development Manager who, if required, will be pleased to help you plan the visit.

The plan will state the date of the visit, which should be at a time that is also acceptable to you. Please bear in mind that if your Standards Verifier/External Examiner has to fly from the UK, there may be a need for him/her to obtain a visa or other travel documents. Please build this time into the date agreed.

The plan will also detail the activities that will be undertaken. When the Standards Verifier/External Examiner visits you s/he will need to have the maximum amount of time possible to complete their planned activities.

You are asked not to provide hospitality or other activities beyond ensuring they have some refreshments during their visit.

Standards Verifiers/External Examiners are not contracted to attend press conferences, prize giving or similar activities. They are allocated to your centre to check that the assessment of the learners' work is to the required standard and not to act as a Pearson representative for public relations purposes.

Please note that a visit normally takes one full working day. However if there is a high number of registrations at your centre or there is an urgent need for certification for a programme that has not yet been fully sampled then more than one day may be needed. In this case there will be an extra cost incurred.

The plan

Everything that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner will want to see should already exist. It should be a matter of getting everything together and letting everybody know what is expected of them on the day of the visit.

This list will help you think about what is required and can be used as a planning aid for the visit.

Required documents for the visitsibilities	Person responsible
The visit plan sent by the Standards Verifier/External Examiner	Lead Internal Verifier; Quality Nominee
The Internal Verification plan that shows what is going to be Internally Verified, by whom and when	Lead Internal Verifier
The assessment plan that shows when units are going to be delivered and when assessment opportunities are going to be given to learners	Lead Internal Verifier; Programme Manager
Internal Verification records that show assignments were internally verified before being given to learners	Lead Internal Verifier
Internal Verification records that show assessment decisions for all Assessors have been sampled and shown to be correct	Lead Internal Verifier; Quality Nominee
Assessed learner work as called for by the Standards Verifier	Assessors
All assessment records that track the learners	Programme Manager
The last Standards Verifier/External Examiner report (unless this is a first visit)	Quality Nominee; Lead Internal Verifier; Programme Manager

There will be a number of activities that will need to be planned. This list is not everything but it will help you arrange a useful visit;

Things to do	Person who may do this
Inform the staff and learners of the date of the visit and why the visit is happening	Senior Management
Check the learner registration details on Edexcel Online match the learners on programme	Examinations Officer
Check assessment records are up-to-date	Programme Manager
Check that all teachers are using the right unit specification	Programme Manager; Lead Internal Verifier
Check that Internal Verification records are up to date	Lead Internal Verifier
Check that learners' work is available and accessible by the Standards Verifier/External Examiner	Assessors
Arrange a room for the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to work in quietly and undisturbed	Senior Management
Book transport and driver to collect and return the Standards Verifier/External Examiner to the hotel	Senior Management
Arrange the time for the staff to meet with the Standards Verifier/External Examiner	Regional Development Manager and centre
Arrange the time for the learners to meet with the Standards Verifier/ External Examiner	Programme Manager
Assemble the materials in the room	Programme Team

The day of the visit

This is an important day. When the Standards Verifier/External Examiner arrives, please confirm the visit plan that should already have been agreed.

Please note the following points.

- The formal centre introductions should not take more than 15-20 minutes and the verification process should start as soon as possible.
- The Standards Verifier/External Examiner is going to spend most of their time checking assessment practice and this has to be undertaken in private. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner should be left alone to do this. There should be no-one else in the room.
- We know that your staff have their regular jobs to do, so please do not cancel classes. The visit plan should help make sure that appropriate people are available at the right time.
- Lunch should be a low key event. The first time that a Standards Verifier/External Examiner visits, it may be a more formal occasion. Lunch should take no more than one hour; otherwise it begins to take up too much of the verification time. It is recognised that you may want to use the lunch as an opportunity for your staff to meet the Standards Verifier/External Examiner.
- Please try not to ask the Standards Verifier/External Examiner how the process is going. Kindly wait for everything to be completed. A final judgement will be announced at the feedback session at the end of the day.
- Please ensure that meetings run to time. The day may be extended by mutual agreement if extra discussion time is required.
- The feedback session is formal. It is important that the Standards Verifier/External Examiner is given the opportunity to present their findings and recommendations. The feedback may require action points that need to be agreed with senior management so it is recommended that at least one member of the senior management team are present at this meeting. The Standards Verifier/External Examiner will make the same points in their written report.
- Gifts should not be given to Standards Verifier/External Examiner. They are not expected. Your culture may provide small friendship gifts, such as booklets or photographs of your

centre. A Standards Verifier/External Examiner can accept these if it is your culture to give them. Other gifts could be considered to impose a conflict of interest and as refusal to accept them may offend, we ask you not to offer gifts to Standards Verifier/External Examiner.

Top tips

These pointers to good practice will help you ensure a successful outcome to the visit.

- Make sure that Assessors are giving appropriate feedback to learners. The feedback on the learner work should clearly show which of the assessment or grading criteria they have achieved.
- Provide a realistic scenario for each assignment. For Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications, contextualise the generic Merit and Distinction criteria in the scenario. Make sure that the learners and the Assessors know that a learner only needs to achieve any one indicative characteristic, in any group of indicative characteristics, in order to achieve that Merit or Distinction criteria. Your Standards Verifier/External Examiner will be able to give you further advice and guidance about this.
- Make sure that your learners have acknowledged their sources of information in their work and that work has not been copied or plagiarised.
- If you are using exams or end tests make sure that the questions relate to the assessment criteria. Assessment must be to the assessment criteria and not marked in any other way. Percentage marking is unacceptable. For more information please refer to 'Guidelines for International Centres – The Use of Time Limited Assessment Activities', available on our website
- The new assessment rules for Levels 2 and 3, introduced in September 2014 have limited the number of times that learners can submit their work for assessment. Make sure that if you are delivering qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 that your staff have read this document; 'BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment' available on our website.

After the visit

Making a good plan should have result in a successful visit. Success will be measured by the following:

- you feel supported and informed about the standards required
- the Standards Verifier/External Examiner has been assured that you are assessing and internally verifying learners' work accurately
- no serious quality issues have been found
- certificates have been released
- you feel prepared for the next visit

If you would like further support to plan a visit, please contact your Standards Verifier/External Examiner or your Regional Office.

For information about Edexcel, BTEC or LCCI qualifications visit [qualifications.pearson.com](https://www.pearson.com/qualifications)

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